STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES #6

"FIRE FROM ABOVE"

by

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Stormwatch: Team Achilles
Issue #6: “Fire From Above”
Written by Micah Ian Wright
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PAGE 1

PANEL ONE

Widescreen. Pinckney on the left, Golovin on the right. They squat, their backs against a broken-off wall on the second story of a burnt-out apartment building with no roof.

CAPTION
Grözny, Former Soviet Republic of Chechnya.

GOLOVIN
Pinckney?

PINCKNEY
Yes?

GOLOVIN
Why did you join StormWatch? I know why Grunier and Weiss are with us... and Jukko... well, where else could HE go?

GOLOVIN
But you... you are different. You’re not like Santini or Coleman. You’re cultured, educated.

PANEL TWO

On Pinckney, looking down into a tin canteen cup full of blackish water. He pulls a wet tea bag out of the water.

PINCKNEY
I suppose you could say I was forced into it. From Birth, really. My parents were quite the traditionalists.

PINCKNEY
First son got the seat in the House of Lords, the land and most of the money. Third son pushed into the church.

PINCKNEY
Middle son - ME - expected to go into the Military. So I did. Turned out I was very good at it.

PANEL THREE

Pinckney takes a drink of his tea.

PINCKNEY
Went to all the best schools, top of my class at Sandhurst Royal Military Academy, breezed through SAS training, fast-tracked for promotion... Full Colonel by thirty-two...

PINCKNEY
And then I had to go and ruin everything by shooting my commanding officer.

PANEL FOUR

Galena stares at Pinckney is mute amazement. Pinckney pours out the dregs of his tea on the ground with one hand and with the other grabs the pair of binoculars around his neck, preparing to use them.

PINCKNEY
Oh, I was forced to, you see, a super powered being had assumed control of the man and was using him to murder the Queen Mother.

PINCKNEY
Horrible woman, that one... rather wished the bugger HAD succeeded... but that's neither here nor there.

PINCKNEY
No, let us say that there few better ways of destroying a promising career than by blowing a Major General's head off all over the Queen's pretty gown.

PANEL FIVE

Widescreen. Pinckney looks over the ruins of the broken wall with a pair of binoculars.

PINCKNEY
And how about you, Galena? Have you ever had the opportunity to shoot a fellow Russian?

GALENA
No.

PINCKNEY
Well, don't despair...

PAGE 2 **2**

PANEL ONE

2/3 page tall, full widescreen, no borders. The entire Russian army is rolling towards Galena and Pinckney. Tanks, Hind Helicopters, troops on foot, tons and tons of everything. This should be utterly terrifying.

PINCKNEY (CAPTION)
...it looks like you're going to get a lot of practice today.

PANEL TWO

1/3 tall, widescreen. Pinckney & Golovin leaning up agains the wall again.

GOLOVIN
What should we do now? Call Santini again?

PINCKNEY
No... he's probably got more important things on his mind right about now.

PAGE 3 **3**

PANEL ONE

BIG. Like 1/2 of the page tall and full wide. In the extreme foreground is SANTINI, looking dead. Blood coming out of his mouth, eyes rolled back into his head.

In the midground is TEFIBI, cowering from the pistol that Assistant Russian Ambassador to the U.N. ILYA KURYAKIN has pointed at him.

In the background, Tefibi’s computer screens show a) The Authority Carrier, and b) Satellite photos of the Grozny region.

CAPTION
New York City, United Nations StormWatch headquarters.

KURYAKIN
Shut down the StormWatch teleporter.

TEFIBI
I can’t.

KURYAKIN
You ***WHAT?***

PANEL TWO

Wide and short. Kuryakin shoves his Makarov Pistol (http://www.a-human-right.com/RKBA/makarov.html) to Tefibi’s head, making a definite indentation. Tefibi cowers, eyes closed.

TEFIBI
It doesn’t really work like that...

KURYAKIN
SHUT.

TEFIBI
It’s not a teleporter, per se...

KURYAKIN
IT.

TEFIBI
I can’t just shut it down...

KURYAKIN
DOWN!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL THREE

Downshot on Tefibi’s face (as if from Kuryakin’s POV). Grim. Resolute. He’s made up his mind to die here rather than shut down the teleporter.

TEFIBI
No. I won’t do it.

TEFIBI
So either shoot me or take your little pussy KGB standard issue 9mm Makarov out of my face.

KURYAKIN
Oh, I’m going to **SHOOT** you, all right...

PANEL FOUR

Shot on Kuryakin and Tefibi. Kuryakin is stunned, incredulous, angry look on his face. Tefibi is smiling.

TEFIBI
Not going to happen. THAT piece of shit Makarov only holds *NINE* shots... but if you actually load nine in the clip, it’ll jam.

TEFIBI
So most **ex**-KGB guys, which you so **OBVIOUSLY** are, only load ***SEVEN*** to make sure they get a clean run through.

TEFIBI
And by my count you put ***SEVEN*** into Colonel Santini.

PAGE 4 **4**

PANEL ONE

Wide on Tefibi & Kuryakin. Kuryakin Smiles. Evil, smirky. Tefibi's not smiling anymore. Hee hee! He's about to die!

KURYAKIN
Too bad for **you**... I had one in the **chamber**.

TEFIBI
To be honest I hadn't thought of that.

TEFIBI
(small type) You're going to shoot me now, aren't you?

KURYAKIN
Oh, Yes.

PANEL TWO

Widescreen, short. Sound-e/fx panel

SOUND E/FX
CHUDD!

PANEL THREE

Blood all over Tefibi's face. He winces from the impact of the bullet...

NO DIALOG

PANEL FOUR

...in Kuryakin's chest.

Angle on Kuryakin, stunned look on his face as he realizes that he's about to die.

NO DIALOG

PANEL FIVE

Same angle... Kuryakin falls towards the ground... Revealing Santini behind him, pistol out, barrel smoking.

SANTINI
Fucking politicians. Blah blah blah, talk your ears off. He shoulda shot you right away.

SANTINI
That way, he'd have company in Hell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTINI

Now let’s find out what’s going on with the field team. I want to pull them out as soon as possible.

PAGE 5 **5**

PANEL ONE

Small. Tefibi points at something off-panel.

TEFIBI
Uh... that’s going to be a problem, sir.

PANEL TWO

Next to Kuryakin’s dead body, a wall-mounted computer unit has a huge bullet hole in it. Smoke pours from the hole. The unit is marked “Project Entry: Property International Operations” Santini is angry.

SANTINI
Are you fucking kidding me? I shot this prick when he was standing in front of the teleporter?

TEFIBI
Don’t yell at me, I didn’t do it!

SANTINI
If you don’t get that thing up and dancing in the next half hour, six of our teammates are going to be dead.

PANEL THREE

Santini on the sattellite-phone to Coleman.

SANTINI
StormWatch Command to StormWatch Field Team. We’ve got a teleporter problem here. Continue your mission and we’ll pull you out when we we’re up and running.

PANEL FIVE

Widescreen. Shot from inside the Dead Giant Guy’s mouth. Peering between his lips, Coleman and Cisco see a group of people standing off in the distance.

COLEMAN
That’s not good news, Command. We’re covered in Tangos here... and the other half of The Authority should be here any second. Hurry up with those repairs. Field Team Out.

PAGE 6 **6**

PANEL ONE

Big Panel. Hasan-i Sabbah from Issue #2 & 3 stands in the midground, staring down at the unconscious Midnighter and Engineer and Hawksmoor who are in the foreground. Aswad Ziballah (the mist-woman from #2-3) drifts in the air to his left. To his right is the huge Hulk-like beast from last issue.

CAPTION
Grözny, Former Soviet Republic of Chechnya.

SABBAH
I thought there were six of them? Where are the other three?

PANEL TWO

Widescreen. Swift streaks through the scene, wings back, arms at ther side, tearing through Aswad, scattering her mists. Put a really light background behind them so that we can see this happening.

SWIFT
Oh, We're around.

PANEL THREE

Wide angle on the fight from the ground.

The huge hulk-like creature leaps through the air at The Doctor who floats in mid-air. Apollo swoops into scene behind the startled Hasan, using his heat vision to burn him into two pieces down the middle.

CREATURE
Grrrhnnaaah!

DOCTOR
Oh, Dear. That'll be enough of that.

PANEL FOUR

Downshot on the fight from mid-air above the Doctor.

The Doctor has a hand gesture up. The Creature has stopped in mid-air right in front of The Doctor. It's confused but still angry. On the ground below, Apollo burns the jelly-like goo which is the melting Hasan-i Sabbah.

CREATURE
Ehr?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR
Oh, you poor thing... You don’t want to be here at all, do you?

CREATURE
Nugh.

PAGE 7 **7**

PANEL ONE

The Doctor snaps his fingers and the Creature fades from view. Swift hovers at the edge of the panel.

SWIFT
How did you kill it?

DOCTOR
Swift, that “IT” was a nine-year-old autistic boy that these filth had turned into a super villain.

DOCTOR
I’ll be damned if I’m going to kill some innocent kid who just wants to be left alone.

PANEL TWO

Green grassy field somewhere in an idyllic valley. The Creature is dressed in sheepherder’s robes. It holds a huge staff and stands amongst a bunch of sheep. It’s very Happy now.

CREATURE
Muyuugh!

DOCTOR (CAPTION)
I sent him somewhere where he’d be happy.

PANEL THREE

The Doctor’s side is torn open by Aswad Ziballah, spilling his entrails into the wind.

DOCTOR
GHaaghk!

PANEL FOUR

The Doctor turns, his face contorted with anger. His guts are putting themselves back into his body. He’s wiggling his fingers (come on, let’s stop pretending that he’s anything other than a ripoff of Dr. Strange and throw some of those great Ditko finger poses in there!)

DOCTOR
That HURT you BITCH!

PANEL FIVE

Aswad turns from Black Mist into a bunch of bright Yellow Sunflowers falling to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR
This one’s pure evil. I don’t mind killing pure evil.

PAGE 8 **8**

PANEL ONE

The Doctor rubs his side where he repaired himself. He floats over the unconscious Authority members. He snaps his fingers.

DOCTOR
Up and at ‘em, you two.

PANEL TWO

Midnighter and The Engineer wake up, rubbing their heads in pain.

ENGINEER
Oooh, I feel like a chicken milanesa.

DOCTOR
Hawksmoor’s bleeding internally. I’m taking him back to the Carrier. Do you need help with StormWatch?

MIDNIGHTER
Hardly. You take care of Jack, We’ll mop up here.

PANEL THREE

The Doctor walks into an Authority “Door,” the unconscious Hawksmoor floating face-up in mid-air behind him. Midnighter is getting to his feet in the background.

MIDNIGHTER
We need some hard intel on these terrorists before we go after StormWatch.

PANEL FOUR

The Engineer kneels by one of the dead duplicate men that the Midnighter killed in issue #5. Her fingers are extended, jammed into the dead man’s nose and ears. Maybe she has extra fingers jammed into his eyes and mouth? That would be real cool and sick.

ENGINEER
I’m on it. Replaying his short-term memory now. Allah, Great Satan, Evil Man in Black kicking in my windpipe, Yada Yada Yada... okay, here we go...

ENGINEER
This is all of them. Between us and StormWatch, they’re all dead. Their leader’s name is Dhul Fiqar...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FIVE

On Midnighter. He’s VERY interested in this.

MIDNIGHTER
THE Dhul Fiqar? He’s a superhuman activator! I need a location. NOW!

PANEL SIX

The Engineer points down the street. The Midnighter is already running in the direction she’s pointing.

ENGINEER
He’s holed up in a mosque two kilometers that way on the left side of the road.

MIDNIGHTER
I’ll be there in 3 minutes. Stay here. I’ll use the telepathic link if I need backup.

PAGE 9 **9**

PANEL ONE

Apollo floats near The Engineer.

ENGINEER
Shouldn't you go with him?

APOLLO
Naah. I don't want to trigger the "you never trust me to do anything by myself" fight.

APOLLO
Besides, I -

PANEL TWO

A bullet enters Apollo's shoulder as his eyes roll back in his head and his skin turns a dark blue.

APOLLO
Urk!

PANEL THREE

The Engineer runs towards Apollo, her metal skin gone, normal skin tones back.

ENGINEER/ANGIE
Apollo! I- huh? Swift! My nanobots aren't responding!

PANEL FOUR

In front of Angie/The Engineer, Jaeger Weiss stands over Apollo pointing a strangely shaped rifle at his chest.

JAEGER
This rifle fires a nanoparticle sized black hole encased in a magnetic klein bottle. Two shots will drain him completely of solar energy and kill him. Tell your friend to stop.

PANEL FIVE

High overhead downshot. Swift plunges straight for Jaeger, going to split him to pieces like she did the Evil Doctor in Authority #20. On the edge of the panel, we can see Coleman aiming a weapon at Swift.

SWIFT
Get ready to Pop, Tin Head.

CONTINUED:

PANEL SIX

Swift turns and flies straight into a wall. BRUTAL!

NO DIALOG

PAGE 10 **10**

PANEL ONE

Coleman holds a horn-shaped device, pointing it at Swift. Angie screams at him.

ANGIE/ENGINEER
What did you do to her, you bastard? What did you do to me?

COLEMAN
Concentrated sound waves. Same thing that makes birds fly into jet engines. She'll be fine.

COLEMAN
As for you, I just put your little bugs to sleep. Little something we learned how to do after examining the technology of the Nevada Nanotech Garden your predecessor created.

PANEL TWO

Coleman points his finger at Angie.

COLEMAN
Now we're going to tie you both up, finish our business here and go home. No reason for things to get violent... our fight's not with you.

PANEL THREE

Small. Coleman on the mike. Cisco binds Angie up with a metal cable in the background.

COLEMAN
Bravo One, Be advised that The Midnighter is headed your way. He seemed very interested in finding-

PANEL FOUR

A huge empty mosque room. A bent, robed figure sits on a floor mat with its back to camera, arms up at 45 degree angles, praying.

JUKKO (O.S.)
Dhul Fiqar.

PANEL FIVE

Close on the robed figure. He turns towards camera. It's Dhul Fiqar. He's an old, old man in a turban and robes. Burnt by years in the sun, blind in one eye. Four... maybe ten teeth. Hardly the terrifying leader of a band of terrorists.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DHUL FIQAR
<Yes, my child?>

PANEL SIX

Jukko sits down next to Fiqar. Fiqar beams up at him. He’s not quite there, mental-like. So yeah, the big terrorist boss is a halfwitted goat herder.

JUKKO
<I need your help, little father.>

DHUL FIQAR
<You... you are not one of my children... yet still you have the light of Allah within you?>

JUKKO
<I know you can bring the light of Allah, little father... But could you also dim the light of Allah?>

MIDNIGHTER (O.S.)
Hahahahaha!

PAGE 11 **11**

PANEL ONE

New angle... mid-shot. Midnighter stands in a doorway, clapping in derision, a sneer on his face.

MIDNIGHTER
So that’s your problem?

MIDNIGHTER
You can’t accept what you are, so you hate and kill the rest of us?

MIDNIGHTER
You’re a closet-case Superophobic Cape-basher?

PANEL TWO

Midnighter-Vision (that all-red targeting vision of his). Small targets superimposed over Jukko’s head, chest and groin. Jukko is standing, holding a device about the size of a cel phone in his hand. A large ?Question Mark? is imposed to the right of the device with a circle around it and a line drawn to the device. Midnighter’s computer has No Idea what is in Jukko’s hand. Midnighter’s hand points towards Jukko (remember, we’re in his POV here). Dhul Fiqar remains sitting.

JUKKO
The last time we met, you wanted to see what I could do. Do you still?

JUKKO
This is your last chance to back out.

MIDNIGHTER (O.S.)
And what’s THAT? Some pathetic secret weapon? I’m quivering.

JUKKO
No. Not a weapon. Just a little something to bring you off your high horse. A little present, courtesy of Henry Bendix’s files.

PANEL THREE

Midnighter-Vision. Fucked-Up Version. Like a TV unplugged from the cable... all fuzz and snow. The vague shape of Jukko is visible.

JUKKO
See, the funny thing about you Midnighter is that you’re not truly a SPB. Not a real one anyway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUKKO
You weren’t born to it. You’re just a collection of wetware and software upgrades.

JUKKO
You were made into a freak. Just like me.

PANEL FOUR

Midnighter’s POV, but it’s not Computer-Vision... it’s just a normal shot, normal colors, normal. We’re looking down at Middy’s hands, outstretched in front of us, palms-up, open. In the distance is Jukko in full, natural color.

JUKKO
The problem is... software always has bugs in it. Problems with viruses. That sort of thing.

MIDNIGHTER (O.S.)
What have you DONE to ME?

PANEL FIVE

On Jukko. Smiling.

JUKKO
I’ve turned it all off. Your fight analysis computers, your super-strength, gyroscopic balance, rapid healing, doubletime nerve induction... all of it.

JUKKO
I’ve made you into a human again.

JUKKO
And now I’m going to kick your human ass.

PAGE 12 **12**

OKAY: these are two of the world's best hand-to-hand guys. This fight sequence had better leave the readers gasping for breath or we haven't done our jobs right. If for some reason these web pictures won't load up for you, just let me know and I'll send jpegs of the moves.

This fight needs to kick ass. Real ass, not movie-fu or any of that crap... flying kicks look cool but anyone trying them would get his ass beat in the real world but fast.

PAGE LAYOUT

A large drawing of the Midnighter's face top in the top left corner looking down, drawing the reader's eye down and to the right where a large drawing of Jukko's face is in the bottom right, looking up and left. They both look SUPER angry.

The page is covered with drawings of the two of them in combat. Black background, no panels divisions... time has slowed to a crawl as these two duke it out.

Top to bottom, the fight poses are:

The Midnighter fires a mighty super-heroic shoulder punch right at Jukko's head, popping him in the chin. Enjoy it, Middy, because it's your last cheap shot today.

The Pulling Hand - Jukko on the left pulls Midnighter's punch downwards towards his waist and PUNCHES him square in the face with his free left hand, twisting Midnighter's head back and crushing his nose into goo. Blood squirts from below Middy's mask. Ewww! Here's what this looks like:

http://www.kamonwingchun.com/images/Lap%20Sao.jpg

Now, milliseconds later, Jukko pulls his arm back towards himself, delivering a reverse elbow hack... this picture is a forward elbow hack, so we'll have to reverse Midnighter's head (to be flying backwards away from camera) and use the back side of the elbow (the photo uses the front elbow):

http://www.kamonwingchun.com/images/Pai%20Jarn%20Example.jpg

A Muay Thai knee-to-face kick:

http://www.martial-way.com/images/thai.jpg

Standing Guillotine hold:

http://www.rhythmfist.com/Mag2/rfmag2art4pg1.htm

Into a Ma Bu Ti:

http://www.kungfuusa.net/images/photo_page/087.jpg

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Into the Arm Lock

http://www.osensi.com/images/jiujitsu28.jpg

http://www.tapirback.com/hdma/hd3.jpg

If for some reason, some picture doesn’t work, try going to:

Http://www.fightauthority.com - click on techniques - grappling

This is a good starting point to find some good stuff.

PAGE 13 **13**

PANEL ONE

Close shot on Jukko and Midnighter, rolling around on the ground like a couple of lovers, only Jukko’s got the Midnighter in the Jiu-Jitsu Armlock while choking off his oxygen with his legs.

JUKKO
Fight computer or no, surely you recognize that you cannot break this hold. Surrender or I will break your arm.

MIDNIGHTER
Go... Fuck... Yourself...

JUKKO
Have it your way.

PANEL TWO

Jukko applies a little pressure and snaps the Midnighter’s right arm the wrong way, shattering his elbow inside of his leather sleeve. MAKE THIS LOOK REALLY PAINFUL.

MIDNIGHTER
Aaaaaagh!

JUKKO
Oh, yes, I also turned back on your pain receptors. How many years has it been since you truly felt pain?

JUKKO
It is, as they say, a real bitch.

PANEL THREE

Jukko shifts around so that his shoulders rest on top of the Midnighter’s good left arm, pinning it.

Jukko pushes his right forearm into the Midnighter’s neck to stop his flow of air. Middy’s broken right arm flails helplessly, unable to help him.

Jukko’s legs are arched, bent at the knees, feet flat on the floor. He pulls the Midnighter’s right leg up between Jukko’s two legs with his left hand. Jukko’s torso rests atop of Midnighter’s, keeping him from shifting.

MIDNIGHTER
You’re... using... superpowers.

JUKKO
No. Just Jiu-Jitsu.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

Jukko pulls the Midnighter’s leg up to Jukko’s chest, snapping the Midnighter’s knee backwards. PAIN! The Midnighter screeches in agony.

JUKKO

And anatomy.

MIDNIGHTER

Yeeeeeeeggggh!

PANEL FIVE

Small panel. Jukko smashes the back of his head downwards into the Midnighter’s face, crushing his nose again. Blood squirts!

JUKKO

And leverage.

MIDNIGHTER

Guhhhhd!

PAGE 14 **14**

PANEL ONE

Close on The Midnighter as he tries to rise to his feet... but a broken elbow and knee tend to make that kinda hard. His crushed nose drains a steady stream of blood and snot. Jukko's feet in the foreground.

JUKKO (O.S.)
You see, Midnighter, when I heard you were heading for Dhul Fiqar, I figured that the only reason you could possibly want him alive...

PANEL TWO

Same shot. Jukko kicks the Midnighter's good arm out from underneath him. Midnighter faceplants into the pavement.

JUKKO (O.S.)
Was so that you could make a few thousand more Authority members. That's not going to happen.

PANEL THREE

Same shot. Jukko kicks the Midnighter in the side of the head.

JUKKO (O.S.)
Because I'm going to kill him and teleport his corpse into the sun.

JUKKO
There are too many "SUPER" people like you and me already... the world doesn't need more.

PANEL FOUR

Really Close Shot. Jukko holds the 90% unconscious, battered Midnighter by the jaw, lifting his head up so that Jukko can whisper in his ear. Midnighter's mask is cut and split, his eyes swollen and black, his nose crushed, lips cut and bleeding, a tooth missing.

JUKKO
And just so you know... my "superpower?" The one I used to "beat" you?

JUKKO
I'm uber-empathic. I feel the pain of every living thing within a four-mile radius. Including yours. Everything I just did to you.

JUKKO
So don't you EVER mock me for wanting to be human again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FIVE

Over Jukko’s shoulder. He Punches the Midnighter HARD in the base of the head. A Medulla punch. Bonk. Out like a light.

NO DIALOG

PAGE 15 **15**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen panel. Midnighter flat on his face in the foreground, unconscious. Dhul Fiqar sits on his mat. Jukko kneels next to Dhul Fiqar.

JUKKO
<I am sorry we were interrupted, Dhul Fiqar. We were talking about the light of Allah...>

DHUL FIQAR
<Yes, you wanted me to remove it? I am sorry, my son... that is not something I can do.>

JUKKO
<I am very sorrowful to hear that.>

PANEL TWO

On Fiqar. He beams a toothless grin at Jukko.

DHUL FIQAR
<But why, my son? Why would you ever want to remove the loving light of Allah?>

DHUL FIQAR
<You should bathe in his glory... for surely you are one of his chosen few who have received his glorious gifts?>

JUKKO
<Some of Allah’s gifts are better than others, Dhul Fiqar.>

PANEL THREE

Jukko helps Dhul Fiqar to his feet. The old man looks ecstatically happy.

JUKKO
<Come, Little Father, it is time to go.>

DHUL FIQAR
<Are we going somewhere? I have not been allowed to leave the mosque for some time. Will it be cold? These old bones get cold quite easily, my son.>

PANEL FOUR

Widescreen. In the foreground is the unconscious Midnighter, Jukko’s shut-off (and on) switch a yard from his hand. Jukko gently helps the old man out of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUKKO
No, Little Father... it is QUITE warm where you are going.

PAGE 16 **16**

PANEL ONE

Jaeger, hand on his ear, listening to a radio message from Jukko. He stands above Apollo, Dark Matter rifle pointed at his eye.

JUKKO (OVER RADIO)
Bravo Team Two, this is Bravo One. Mission Accomplished. Midnighter neutralized, Dhul Fiqar terminated. Meet me at rendezvous point Delta for Exfiltration.

JAEGER
Affirmative Bravo One. Glad to hear you’re still breathing.

JUKKO (OVER RADIO)
Barely. Even with his upgrades off, punching that little monster was like hitting a bag full of bricks. Bravo One out.

PANEL TWO

Wider shot. Jaeger stands, looking towards Coleman and Cisco.

JAEGER
Bravo Team Two to Charlie Team One and Two. Dhul Fiqar is terminated.

COLEMAN (OVER RADIO)
Charlie One. Message received. Mission Accomplished, let’s clear out.

JAEGER
What about The Authority?

PANEL THREE

Coleman looks down at the captive Swift, wrapped in her steel netting and the cable-bound Angie (skin tones, not Engineer tones).

COLEMAN
We’ve got no fight with them. We let them go.

CISCO
Is that smart? What’s to keep them from coming after us?

SWIFT
Nothing. We’ll come. You’d best kill us now.

CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

Coleman looks into Swift’s eyes. Cisco squats next to her, holding a huge combat knife, pointing it at her face.

COLEMAN
Sorry, Lady. I ain’t you. I don’t go around killing people for no good tactical reason.

COLEMAN
You’d best realize that while you and your team are a little worse for the wear, we didn’t kill any of you.

COLEMAN
Because it was definitely in my power to do so. Luis?

PANEL FIVE

Cisco smiles at Angie as he saws through one of the cables around her chest. Next to them, Coleman cuts through the knot on Swift’s netting.

CISCO
We’re cutting your Gordian Knots. Just Wiggle a lot now and you’ll be out of this in ten minutes. And if either of you beautiful Ladies ever wants to look me up in New York for any reason, you go right ahead.

SWIFT
It’ll be to tear your heart out.

CISCO
You wouldn’t be the first woman to do that, chica bonita.

COLEMAN
Enough. Okay, Alpha, Bravo, Charlie teams, let’s roll. Rendezvous Point Delta.

PAGE 17 **17**

PANEL ONE

Angle over Pinckney’s shoulder. He and Galena are behind a huge fallen tree, watching a string of Russian army tanks in the distance as they drive down the town’s main strip, a jacked-up six lane road.

PINCKNEY
Sorry, sir, that’s not an option any longer. The Russians have cut us off from Exfil Point Delta.

PINCKNEY
And if we’re not pulled out soon, they’re going to be all over our current location in about fifteen minutes.

COLEMAN (OVER RADIO)
What about civilians?

PANEL TWO

Pinckney and Galena run crouched over down the street away from the oncoming Russians.

PINCKNEY
It’s a clear zone... the civvies all bolted long ago.

COLEMAN (OVER RADIO)
Understood. Keep ahead of the Russians and I’ll work on Exfil for you.

PINCKNEY
Just hurry it up, sir. We can’t stay far ahead of diesel tanks for too long.

PANEL THREE

Coleman looks down at Swift.

COLEMAN
StormWatch Command? We’ve got a problem here. How soon you going to have that teleporter working?

SANTINI (OVER RADIO)
We’re working on it, Charlie One. What’s the problem?

COLEMAN
These Russians are everywhere, sir. They’re about to lay a carpet right over us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

StormWatch HQ. Santini looks at Tefibi, waist deep in electrical parts of the teleporter. Tefibi shrugs... “I dunno” kind of look.

SANTINI
We’re on it. Keep ahead of the Russians.
StormWatch out.

PAGE 18 **18**

PANEL ONE

Santini & Tefibi.

SANTINI
What’s the deal?

TEFIBI
Short term? It’s fucked. Long term? With the right parts, I can fix it in two weeks.

SANTINI
Two weeks isn’t good enough. I need something now. What about the old StormWatch teleporter we got from the Special Security Council?

TEFIBI
It worked great from their Low Earth Orbit satellite, but it’s shit for ground to ground.

PANEL TWO

A light turns on in Santini’s head. He smiles.

SANTINI
Orbit. Oh, you’re a fucking genius, Tefibi.

TEFIBI
I am?

SANTINI
Hand me that pen and get me the Russian President on the phone.

PANEL THREE

Santini sketches something on the paper as he talks into the phone. It looks like circle with short curved lines drawn from the area around the circle down to one point on surface of the circle.

SANTINI
Mr. President? It’s Ben Santini, Weatherman, United Nations StormWatch.

SANTINI
Err, Yes. Yes, I’m still alive.

SANTINI
Sir, I’m calling to tell you that the terrorists are all dead and my team has disabled The Authority. You can stop your invasion of Chechnya, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

Amongst the Russian tanks. President Putin sits in the back of a Hum-Vee type combat jeep with General Rostov, the commander of the troops. Putin wears a suit with a flack vest over it and a helmet. He talks into a huge, oversized satellite phone.

PUTIN

I am very pleased as to hear that news, Colonel Santini, but it does not change our situation.

PUTIN

The Russian Army is not a toy I can turn on and off with a switch. If I try to stop them from retaking Chechnya, I risk a insurrection. A mutiny. Possibly even a coup.

PUTIN

Besides, it was made very clear to me by the American White House and your Senator Terns that if I don’t take this course of action, all of my country’s IMF loans and foreign aid will be cut off.

PAGE 19 **19**

PANEL ONE

Santini grips the phone and looks very grim.

SANTINI
Mr. President, if you do not turn your troops back, I shall have to destroy them. I have the capability. Please don't force me to use it.

PANEL TWO

On Putin. He grins into the phone.

PUTIN
Colonel, we both know the capabilities of your troops are extremely limited. I would be very surprised to discover that you have more than eight men on the ground.

PUTIN
Quite frankly, Colonel, I consider these baseless threats to my person to be little more than an insult.

PUTIN
No, I'm sorry, this conversation can serve no further purpose. No, Colonel. Goodbye, Colonel.

PANEL THREE

Putin turns to General Rostov.

PUTIN
The idiot. As if I would turn back from the one military act which will unite Russia's voters behind me once and for all.

ROSTOV
Santini is a good soldier, but too sentimental to be a good politician. He underestimates the popularity which can come from a successful war.

PANEL FOUR

Santini, pissed. He holds out the paper to Tefibi, who is eyes open, amazed.

SANTINI
Can you do this?

CONTINUED:

TEFIBI
That’s a tall order, boss. Not with our computing equipment and not without a teleporter.

SANTINI
Use The Authority’s.

TEFIBI
The Carrier wised up. She locked me out.

SANTINI
Talk to her. Remind her that her people are on the ground also.

PANEL FIVE

Tefibi hunched over the keyboard, rapidly typing, onscreen is the Carrier. Santini smiles beside him.

TEFIBI
She’s going for it.

SANTINI
Fantastic. Alpha, Bravo, Charlie teams freeze where you are and prepare for immediate exfil.

TEFIBI
The Carrier wants to know where we’re getting the material.

SANTINI
Right outside.

PAGE 20 **20**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen. Outside the U.N. building. In the background, the half-reassembled United Nations building stretches up towards the sky. The building is solid from about halfway down and iron skeleton up from there.

In the foreground is a huge construction equipment storage area. Stacks and stacks of steel I-beams are piled up. A wide Authority door passes through the scene left to right, scooping up the beams behind the door there are no piles of beams. Angle the Authority door so that it’s clear that it’s moving.

TECHNICAL CAPTION
Artillery is the fine art of propelling explosives through a rifled cannon into a ballistic trajectory computed using calculus which takes into account distance, wind, temperature, atmospheric density, humidity, and the rotational spin of the Earth.

PANEL TWO

Widescreen. In space. Low Earth Orbit. The Authority door moves through the scene, dumping the steel I-beams out into space.

TECHNICAL CAPTION
This trajectory is But given a teleporter and the proper computational power, there is no reason to use a cannon or explosives of any kind.

PANEL THREE

Widescreen. The steel I-Beams fall diagonally across the panel from top left to bottom right towards the earth, picking up speed now, the fronts of them red-hot with the temperature of re-entry.

TECHNICAL CAPTION
The impact speed of an object falling from rest in space onto the Earth is roughly 40,000 kilometers per hour.

PANEL FOUR

Halfpage wide. Authority Doors open for the StormWatch crew who walk through them, carrying their imprisoned Authority members. Cisco has Swift, Jaeger carries Apollo over his shoulder, Coleman has The Engineer.

TECHNICAL CAPTION
Starting at 250 kilometers above the Earth, that’s about 40,000 kilometers per hour or 11 km/second.

CONTINUED:

PANEL FIVE

Halfpage Wide. Pinckney and Golovin run through an Authority door.

TECHNICAL CAPTION

The explosion that occurs on impact is caused by the rapid release of the kinetic energy of the falling object as it comes to a stop in about one hundredth of a second.

PAGE 21 **21**

PANEL ONE

Small. Jukko Drags the unconscious Midnighter and what looks like a dead Dhul Fiqar through an Authority Door.

TECHNICAL CAPTION
The kinetic energy released when an object travelling at this speed is brought to rest in the impact is 100 million Joules per kilogram of mass.

PANEL TWO

Small. Putin and General Rostov look upwards in the sky. Small shadows cover their faces.

PUTIN
What is that?

PANEL THREE

3/4 of the page. The steel I-beams hit the ground and Shit Blows Up. Giant Mushroom Cloud. Tanks are incinerated, buildings decimated, soldiers incinerated. Go Hog Wild, Whilce.

TECHNICAL CAPTION
This is 25 times greater than the energy produced by the detonation of the same mass of high explosive such as TNT.

TECHNICAL CAPTION
Or, in this case, about the size of a small thermonuclear device.

PAGE 22 **22**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen. 1/4 page high. The Authority's Carrier Deck. The Doctor looks up in surprise from the semi-lucid Jack Hawksmoor. The Authority Door has dumped out Angie, Swift, Midnighter and Apollo onto floor, each in some stage of being completely jacked-up.

DOCTOR
You people DO know that I'm not a trained MEDICAL Doctor, right?

PANEL TWO

Widescreen. 1/4 page high. Stormwatch HQ. Jaeger, Cisco, Coleman, Pinckney, Golovin & Jukko are on the teleport platform. Jukko still carries the dead-looking Dhul Fiqar.

SANTINI
So where's the Authority?

TEFIBI
The Carrier must have separated the two teams during transport.

PANEL THREE

Half page wide. 1/4 page high. The Carrier. The Engineer (metal-skinned again) pulls the Black Hole device out of Apollo's chest. His coloring has returned to normal. She's speaking to The Doctor.

ENGINEER
I guess she realized that there wasn't much point in us fighting again.

DOCTOR
It's like they have a giant spaceship for a Mom, or something.

PANEL FOUR

Half page wide. 1/4 page high. StormWatch HQ. Jukko puts Dhul Fiqar down on his feet. He's not dead! Tefibi & Santini talk in the foreground.

SANTINI
So now what? Do we get ready for them to come try and kick our ass?

TEFIBI
I doubt it. What would the point be? We solved their Russian Army invading Chechnya problem...

CONTINUED:

PANEL FIVE

Half page wide. 1/4 page high. The Doctor crouches over the Midnighter. Jukko’s shut-off switch is taped to his unconscious hand. In the background, The Engineer has turned her arms into razor blades and is cutting the steel belts from around Swift.

ENGINEER
And we solved their Islamic Super-Terrorist problem. Problem solved, dispute at an end. No need to carry things on.

DOCTOR
Can it really be that easy?

PANEL SIX

Tiny Inset Panel. The Doctor presses Midnighter’s button.

PANEL SEVEN

The Midnighter’s swollen black eyes pop open wide. Angry.

MIDNIGHTER
No.

MIDNIGHTER
But it’s over for now.

FIN.

REFERENCE FOR THIS ISSUE: 23

PHOTOS OF RUINED GROZNY
http://www.amina.com/images/grozny.html
  Especially: photo 2 - the ruined tree is a great touch
              Photo 10 - not all buildings collapse cleanly
              Photo 28 - Knocked-down bridge

BIG RUSSIAN HELICOPTER SHOT DOWN OVER GROZNY
http://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/21/international/europe/21RUSS.html
http://www.theworldteam.com/BSP96%20website/TECH.HTM
http://www.mysunrise.ch/users/sduff/bilderskydiving/vichy4.jpg

RUSSIAN GENERAL ERMOLOV
http://www.amina.com/images/ermolov.html

MAP OF CHECHAN REGION
http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2002/08/20/international/20CRAS-MAP.html
http://www.peaceinchechnya.org/maps.htm

SATELLITE MAP OF GROZNY (DJOHAR) BEFORE AND AFTER RUSSIA ATTACKED
http://www.peaceinchechnya.org/photo_djohar.htm